we'll be forgotten when we're gone

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by orphan_account

Summary

January 25th 1996. The day after Dean's 17th birthday, he is dropped off outside Bobby's house with a hole the size of a meteor in his chest.

Notes

This is dedicated to my beloved Elliot (just justcastiel.tumblr.com) for their follower celebration. We both share the same obsession with young Dean and Matt in this story is our own little OMC. Thank you for being who you are Elliot, I love you <3

This is based on the entry of John's journal by Alex Irvine where Dean's first solo hunt on his seventeenth birthday is to burn the bones of two lesbian nuns.

Title is from No Time For Us - Broder Daniel

January 25th, 1996

Without a word, Dean steps out of the Impala, his fingers tightly wrapped around the rough fabric of the straps of his duffel.

"I'll be in touch," John says without looking at him, his gaze set on something down the road. Dean swallows hard, trying to force the lump in his throat to dissolve.

"Yes, sir."

John turns the keys in the ignition and the car rumbles to life. Dean places his hand on the backseat window, and gives Sam a tight smile.

"Bye, Sammy. Stay good, okay?" His voice is just as weak as he feels. With that, they leave. Dean stares at the car until it disappears around a bend far down the road. With heavy steps, he walks up the dirt road leading to the ramshackled house. The shame burns a hole in his chest.

The yard looks the same, except there's even more cars littering the lot now than there were six months ago. The wooden stairs at the front door creak loudly, and there's a dog barking inside.

He knocks three times, "it's me, Dean." There's the sound of something falling over and a bunch of muffled curses before the door swings open.

"The hell you doin' here, boy?"

Bobby looks the same, wearing his dirty trucker cap and a well-worn flannel. The classic hunter outfit. Dean's eyes sting and his throat burns. He can't start crying in front of Bobby. He just *can't*.

"I- I'm…" he stutters, not able to form any coherent sentence.

"Well, get in here before I freeze my goddamn balls off," Bobby grumbles and ushers him inside. The house smells like whiskey, gun oil and old furniture, and a sense of peace rushes over him. Dean stumbles over a pile of dusty books as he makes his way to the living room.

"So, you're gonna tell me why you're here looking like some kicked puppy?" Bobby drops down in the grey - once white - armchair, a beer in hand. Dean can't meet his eyes, instead he fidgets with a loose thread on his old sweater.

"C'mon boy, I don't have all day, spit it out."

Dean's lip trembles, and he feels so goddamn weak. If it's one thing that's been hammered into his brain since he was a kid, it's that boys don't cry. And boys definitely don't act like Dean has done. He puts his knees up to his chest and wraps his arms around himself, in an attempt to not fall apart in a million pieces.

Bobby sighs, and gets up with a loud grunt. "I'll make us some coffee, then you'll tell me what's going on." His tone is softer now, and he squeezes Dean's shoulder when he walks towards the kitchen. Rumsfeld, Bobby's old, blind mutt jumps up on the couch next to him, spins around and then places his head right next to Dean. His warm fur against Dean's thigh is grounding, calming.

A yellow, chipped mug filled to the brim with coffee is placed in his hand.

"Okay kiddo, talk."

Dean takes a steadying breath, “I went on my first solo hunt yesterday.” The burn in his throat is back, and it’s not caused by the scalding coffee. When he closes his eyes, he can still see the faded figures of the two women. He can smell the gasoline. Feel the heat from the flaming bones.

"...You care to elaborate?" Bobby says, taking a big sip from his cup, which smells more like whiskey than coffee. And no he does not want to elaborate. He can’t. Because then Bobby will know, and Dean can’t lose him.

"I screwed up, okay? And Dad dropped me off here because he can’t stand looking at me," His voice breaks at the last words. Bobby’s eyes bore a hole right through him, and Dean squirms. It aches and burns and itches under his skin. A myriad of emotions flit inside of him.

"Like that man hasn't screwed up hundreds of hunts. You shouldn't be out huntin' on your own anyway. You're a kid for christ sake." Bobby's face turns into the scowl he always gets when he talks about John.

"It wasn't the hunt I screwed up," Dean mumbles and draws protection sigils in Rumsfeld's black fur with his finger. "I did something I shouldn't have done and Dad found out."

His mind immediately shifts to that Friday night almost a month ago. Of Matt's soft lips against his. Of fingers running through locks of brown hair and glittering hazel eyes locked on him. The weight of his body, straddling Dean's lap in the driver's seat of the Impala. The terror he felt when the door was yanked open and his dad stared him down with disgust written all over his face. He didn't say a word to him for the next week. Somehow the silence was worse than what happened in Flagstaff.

Bobby waves his hand to keep him talking. There's a deep crease between his eyebrows.

"He didn't say it was because of that. But I know." Dean gulps and takes a few shuddering breaths.

"So yesterday, he put me 'n Sammy in the car and drove up to Wyoming. Haunting in an old church. So, I dug up the bones and I torched them."

His eyes start to sting again. He wants to curl up in a fetal position, or cover himself under a blanket like he was some scared kid. "It was two nuns."

Leanne Reeves and Mae Flores.

Dean won't ever forget the names scribbled down on the note his dad stuck in his hand before driving off without looking back.

"They killed themselves back in the sixties. Because they… they were in love," he chokes out.

He braces himself for the inevitable. For Bobby to put two and two together and throw his sorry ass out the door and tell him to never show his face around here again.

But he doesn't.

Instead he watches Dean closely, then pinches the bridge of his nose.

"He chose that hunt for a specific reason, huh?" Bobby asks.

Please, don't make him say it. Fine tremors run through his hands, and he buries his fingers in Rumsfeld's soft fur.

"I'm sorry," he whispers. His heart thunders in his chest, trying to escape the confinement of his ribcage. He wishes the floor could just swallow him whole. Save him from the loneliness that awaits. It's better to drown in nothingness than to exist in a world all alone.

"The hell are you sorry about?"

Dean blinks.

Then blinks again.

And again.

He stares at the gruff man in front of him, who's looking back with his eyebrows raised, hands firmly clasped around the flowery mug. There's not a trace of the disgust or anger in his eyes. Doesn't he get it? Dean entered the world with a manufacturing defect, something is wrong with him deep down to his very core. He's not the man he's supposed to be, and he never will.

"Dean, look," Bobby sighs, "I'm not exactly good at this *heart-to-heart* thing and maybe I'm an old fart who doesn't really get the whole... *thing*. But I know that you're a good kid, and nothing will change that. No matter what happens or what you do. And if your dad gives you 'n Sam a hard time, you know how to pick up a damn phone."

The tears fall in earnest now. Dean feels boneless, exhausted. Bobby won't throw him out. He doesn't hate him. The relief of the realization makes him dizzy.

"Hey, kid, how about you stop crying and we go fishing? That sounds good to you? I think I even have some pie in the freezer too," Bobby smiles, looking slightly uncomfortable where he sits. Dean manages to nod weakly as he wipes the tears away with the back of his hand.

Bobby collects the fishing gear and fishes out a pie from the bottom of his freezer, whistling some old folk song as he packs a few beers in a cooler. If only Dean could go fetch Sammy and stay here. In the only house he's ever known as home. They could be safe here, they could have a home where they belong.

He knows it's just some farfetched fantasy, a dream that will never come true. Because there will always be another hunt, another motel in soul crushing towns. He will never have this.

He has a job to do after all.

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